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THE COLONIAL POLICY OF JAPAN IN KOREA

BY

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THE COLONIAL POLICY OF JAPAN IN KOREA

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR EDWIN COLLEN, G.C.I.E., C.B., was in the chair at a meeting on December 12, 1906, when Mr. F. A. McKenzie read a paper on "The Colonial Policy of Japan in Korea."

In introducing the lecturer, Sir Edwin Collen said that Mr. McKenzie had acquired much experience and knowledge of Far Eastern affairs as travelling correspondent of the *Daily Mail*. In 1903 he visited Japan, and went on to Korea a few days before the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War. He was present at the Battle of Chemulpho, advanced with the pioneer Japanese scouts towards Manchuria, and joined General Kuroki when he established his headquarters in Northern Korea, remaining with the 1st Imperial Japanese Army until the end of 1904. He then returned to Europe, and during the present year had revisited the Far East, travelling through Japan, Korea, Manchuria, and Northern China. In Korea, besides having considerable opportunities of learning the Japanese point of view from the Marquis Ito and his chief assistants, he secured a great deal of information from the members of the old Korean Government. He also spent some time in the interior, and as far as possible endeavoured to obtain first-hand knowledge of the results of Japanese administration in Korea.

Mr. F. A. McKENZIE said :

The past two years have revealed Japan to the world as one of the supreme colonizing nations on earth. In a little over twenty years the population of Japan has risen by 25 per cent., rising from 36,000,000 to over 48,000,000. For that additional 12,000,000 fresh territory, fresh business, and fresh means of earning bread have had to be found. Japan, with its heavy proportion of mountain and rocky land, could not easily bear the greater population without some form of expansion. Part of the growing millions has been absorbed in the new industrialism. Others find an outlet in the new colonizing enterprises of the Empire. Dai Nippon ! Great Japan is no longer a figure of speech. In Honolulu and in San Francisco, in the back block of Western Australia and the back-streets of Singapore, Japan's surplus population is settled. There are Japanese communities to-day all over China, and in Manchuria they bid fair before many years to outnumber the Manchus and Chinese combined.

Korea represents Japan's greatest colonial experiment. Here there has been not merely an outflow of people, but an absorption of government. Since February, 1904, Korea has been actually, if not nominally, under Japanese jurisdiction. The story of what has been done in that time in the Hermit Kingdom is of double interest to us. First, it concerns us, ourselves, the greatest of colonizing nations, for it enables us to see how others attempt to solve the problem we have so often had to deal with. Next, the fact that Japan and England are to-day in alliance, and that England has in a sense stood sponsor for the Land of the Rising Sun to other Western nations, make the external and colonizing policy of Japan a matter of real moment for British people.

Until thirty years ago Korea remained closed to all nations. Japan, its neighbour to the south-west, had a little foothold at Fusan. Between Korea and Manchuria, its northern neighbour, lay the great borderland of the bandit regions, in which no man's life was worth an hour's purchase. Time after time Western Powers had tried to break down Korean exclusiveness, but always in vain. The cables of a British ship, hung in triumph over the gateways of Ping-yang, proclaimed to the nation the destruction that awaited foreigners who visited there.

Then in 1876 Japan came and conquered. A treaty of peace and friendship was made between the Empire and the kingdom, by which three ports were opened to Japanese commerce, and Japanese subjects were given the privilege of travelling within an area of about three miles around each port. The Japanese further secured a right of establishing a Legation in Seoul, the Korean capital. This treaty was followed in a few years by others, with America, with Great Britain, and with various European Powers. Consulates-General and then Legations were established in Seoul, and the West found itself in touch with the quaintest and most fantastic of the peoples of the East.

The King and autocrat of Korea, living in his wonderful palace underneath the shadow of the mountain at Seoul, heard of the marvels of the West. Even his great dancing-hall, the hall of the hundred pillars, or his wonderful lake of the thousand lilies, or his armies of white-robed singing-girls failed then to satisfy him. He must know of other lands. So he had foreign teachers; the wives of missionaries made friends with the Empress; and schemers and intriguers of every kind came and advanced their plans for the progress of the kingdom.

Two nations had already marked Korea out as their own. Japan wanted it to insure the safety of her territories, and to give her people a field for expansion. Russia desired it because here she could find safe and easy open ports for the terminus of her already projected trans-Siberian line. But there was one Power in the way: China possessed a somewhat nebulous suzerainty over Korea. In 1894 Japan declared war against China, revealed herself as a military nation, scored her great victory, and ended Chinese suzerainty once for all.

The natural result was that Japan immediately acquired supreme authority in Seoul. The Japanese Minister had a great and influential party of natives behind him, and he set about a campaign of reform. He was met at point after point by the resolute opposition of the Queen. She was as strong a character as her husband was weak; she believed that Japan was threatening the independence of her country, and so she met intrigue with intrigue. Count Inouye, the well-known Japanese statesman, was the Minister for Nippon at that time. He returned to Japan, but before leaving he had an interview with the Queen, who made offers of friendship which did not meet with a very cordial response. Inouye was succeeded by Viscount Miura, a stern soldier. Miura determined to solve the Palace difficulty in the quickest way. He conspired with the anti-royal party, and one night a body of disguised Japanese policemen and natives burst into the Palace, Japanese troops openly supporting them. When they quitted the Palace they left a dead Queen behind them.

The Japanese Minister had made a terrible and, apparently an irreparable, mistake. He was recalled and put on trial by his Government.

His successor managed to drive the Korean people,

now bitter against the murderers of their Queen, to still further exasperation. The Japanese had not then learned, and apparently have not yet learned, that while you can safely break or make Governments, you must not interfere with personal customs. A nation will stand an income-tax of 1s. 6d. in the £1 with a smile, but it will smash the railing of Hyde Park if you try to close the public-houses at ten o'clock. The Japanese did the equivalent of trying to close the public-houses at ten o'clock. Under their direction it was decreed that the Korean man must leave off his top-knot. To the Korean the top-knot is the symbol of manhood and honour. The day when a boy has his hair made into a knot is the proudest of his life, because it shows that childhood is over. To be without the knot is to be a weakling and an object of contempt. The people rose in anger. The Emperor just about this time escaped from the rebels who were guarding him, and took shelter in the Russian Legation, and the supremacy of the Japanese was for the moment over.

The spell of Russian supremacy which followed was not very brilliant. The Russian Minister in Korea at the time, M. Waeber, was a wise and conciliatory statesman. He secured the appointment of numerous Russian officials, a Russian bank arose, and Russian military instructors began to appear. His Government thought, however, that he was not going fast enough, and so he was succeeded by M. Speyer, who, under orders from above, tried to quicken the pace. The Russians attempted to oust an English official, Mr. McLeavy Brown, who had been given charge of the Customs. Here for once England asserted herself. A British fleet arrived in Chemulpho Harbour, and Mr. Brown retained place and power.

The Russians proved incapable of holding the great advantage they had gained through the blunder of Viscount Miura. Japan began to win back her old position again, and for some years a close diplomatic struggle was maintained. The Korean Emperor—for he had taken the higher title—a weak and well-meaning man, was now pulled one way, now the other. The Customs were under the charge of Mr. Brown, who proved himself an unbiassed and magnificently able administrator. He employed the methods of Sir Robert Hart, his old chief in China. He considered that it was his duty to maintain the open door and to act as the guardian not only of the particular interests of England, but of the common interests of all white nations. Thus it was that in the Korean Custom Service men of almost every European Power worked in harmony under their Irish leader. In a country notoriously corrupt, there was in his department no suspicion of corruption or of favouritism. Mr. Brown was for a time given control of Korean finances, but his position there was never so absolute as in the Customs. So far as his power went, however, he effected great reforms. Other departments of the Korean service were also administered by foreign advisers, but Mr. Brown stood alone. Korea was in the Postal Union ; there was a telegraphic service from end to end of the land ; a comfortable railway, built with the American capital, ran from Chemulpho to Seoul ; and in the capital itself the hiss of the electric car was heard. Thus in the early years of this century we would have found in Korea a combination of modernity and of barbarism. A high official might be appointed because of his skill as a sorcerer, and would use a modern Swedish telephone to help him transact his business. The Emperor had his rooms lit with elec-

tricity, and sat under the rays of the incandescent lamp, debating how many devils should be employed at his mother-in-law's funeral.

All this time Japanese influence and the number of Japanese settlers had been steadily growing. In the early nineties two able diplomats stood face to face, M. Pavloff, the courtly representative of the Czar, and M. Hayashi, a quiet, pleasant, and determined spokesman for the Mikado. World events had combined to make Korea of greater and greater importance. Russia and Japan both wanted her as never before, and in the closing days of 1903 it became clear that the struggle for supremacy between the two must soon be settled.

In February, 1904, Japan declared war against Russia, and her troops poured into Korea. At this time she had the choice of two ways before her. She might, making the stress of war an excuse, tear up her old treaties and assume formal control of Korea, or she might elect to regard Korea as her independent ally. Korea itself was powerless to resist whatever was done.

The latter course was chosen. A policy of open annexation would have thrown difficulties in the way of the Japanese troops marching through the country, and would further have given an opening for hostile action by European Powers. So a protocol between Japan and Korea was signed on February 23, a fortnight after the landing of the Japanese soldiers. In this protocol the Imperial Government of Japan pledged itself in a spirit of firm friendship to insure the safety and repose of the Imperial House of Korea, and it further definitely guaranteed the independence and territorial integrity of the Korean Empire.

Most foreigners in Korea at that time, myself among them, heartily welcomed the coming of the

Japanese. We were tired of the corruption and exaction of the yangbans and high Korean officials; we knew that here was a nation that had been kept down for generations by the ineptness of its own Government; and we had daily evidence of the harm a feeble, incapable, and occasionally cruel administration was inflicting on the workers. We believe, then, that Japan, while dealing possibly stern measures against the corrupt officials, would give justice to the common man, would bring honesty in administrative work, and would open up the country as never before for the benefit of world trade.

Here was Japan's golden opportunity, the opportunity to demonstrate to the world that she was as mighty in the arts of peace as in her growing conquests in war. We believed that she would seize the occasion, and show in Korea, as she had shown time after time under other circumstances, that she had in her possibilities which the West had hardly yet begun to fathom.

The Japanese began well. They were already pushing ahead a great railway from Fusan to Seoul. Some of the most corrupt Korean officials, including Yi Yong Ik, the greatest and the most unscrupulous of all, found it convenient to retire from politics for a time.

Large numbers of Korean coolies were employed in carrying supplies to the north for the Japanese soldiers, and they were all paid with a punctuality and liberality which left them amazed. It seemed that Japan would repeat in Korea the strict rectitude which had been the distinguishing mark of her occupation of Southern Manchuria in 1895.

Even while battles were being fought in the North, Seoul was full of talk of reforms. The currency was to be altered, new schools were to be built, new railways to

be laid, the Palace purified. The soothsayers and fortune-tellers, who formed so prominent a feature of Seoul life, were, it was rumoured, to be cleared out. The incapable Korean army, whose officers made up in splendour of uniform what they lacked in courage, was to be almost wholly disbanded. The Emperor was to place himself in the hands of his Japanese advisers. There was to be no more selling of Government posts ; farming was to be transformed ; banking was to be modernized ; and the lazy officials who did nothing but prey off the people were to be swept away. The Japanese were loud in their emphasis of the fact that they were in Korea, not alone for their own benefit, but as a nation doing the work of all civilized races in securing the maintenance of the open door and of equal opportunities for all.

Then came a succession of remarkable Japanese victories, and the tone of statesmen and administrators altered. Schemes were put forward and methods adopted which first amazed and then alienated large sections of the white residents. One of the first of these new departures went by the name of the Nagamori scheme. The Japanese Legation proposed that all the waste land of the country, which meant the greater part of Korea, should be handed over to a certain Mr. Nagamori, a Japanese subject, for the term of fifty years, without payment. Mr. Nagamori was to be free to do what he liked with the lands, to sell or to keep them, and the properties were to be released from taxation for some years. If, at the end of fifty years, the Japanese Government wanted them back, it could have them by paying back all the money which had been expended, together with compound interest.

The Japanese Legation fought very hard to get this

through, but the matter excited such resentment among the Koreans and the foreigners that it was allowed to lapse. This scheme helped to start a great revulsion of feeling amongst the Koreans against the Japanese. This revulsion was increased by a still more powerful cause.

The Japanese subjects, chiefly coolies and small tradesmen, had begun to pour into Korea by the ten thousand. Square-shouldered, heavily-built, and harsh-jawed as many of them were, they presented the least attractive or desirable section of their countrymen. They had been drawn by the hope of high wages, and their womenfolk came with them. They walked with the air of conquerors, flushed with the knowledge of the victories of their own brave countrymen in Manchuria; they despised the Koreans as cowards, and began to treat them accordingly.

These Japanese coolies soon found that there was no check on them; they could do as they liked. The few Japanese officials established over the country were very much overworked, and had no time to attend to small matters. No Korean magistrate dare punish a Japanese. The Japanese might plunder the Korean coolie wholesale, as he often did; he might beat the life out of his body, as he often did; he might turn him out of house and home without compensation, and there was no redress. If the Korean went to the Japanese Consul to complain, he would often enough be thrown out by some minor official.

When I returned to Korea this summer, I found the country ringing from end to end with the stories of the cruelty and lack of control of the Japanese settlers. Friends of my own, whom I had known two years before as Japan's most enthusiastic friends, were now bitter and

alienated by the brutalities which had come under their notice, and by the impossibility of obtaining redress for them. No one believed that the leading Japanese authorities approved of the actions of their nationals, but practically everyone blamed them for allowing 50,000 or 60,000 of the lowest class of their countrymen to overrun the land without making any provisions for their orderly control.

The Japanese next excited great resentment by their policy of seizing the best land of the country, under the excuse that it was wanted for military purposes. In many cases the Koreans found that a few weeks after the properties were appropriated lines of Japanese shops and private houses would go up on these so-called military lands. The wholesale seizures outside Seoul and Pingyang and still further north produced great misery. The Japanese in some cases paid a wholly inadequate sum to the Korean officials to compensate the dispossessed people; but in many cases known to me the people had not received even the most inadequate compensation, although their land had been taken from them for over a year.

The avowed policy of the Japanese has been not to interfere unduly in the internal affairs of the country. This seems to have been interpreted in many cases to mean that the Japanese shall only interfere where there is direct profit to be made for their people. This is a hard thing, I know, to say, but what I witnessed in Pingyang and Sun-Chon forces the words from me. To quote only the case of Sun-Chon, the Japanese who have settled there compel the Koreans to subscribe a monthly rate for the improvement of the town. The administration of this rate is wholly in Japanese hands. Last July I went into the local prison of Sun-Chon. A Japanese

sentry stood on the opposite side of the roadway, and the prisoners inside had been brought there and handed over to the Korean gaoler by the Japanese. I shall only say that I found in it conditions rivalling the worst torture-hole of an old Chinese gaol.

To turn for the moment to a brighter side of the picture. Mr. Megata, who had come over from Japan as financial adviser, set about the reform of the currency. The Korean currency of the old type was among the worst in the world. Counterfeiting was almost a recognised business, and a very large part of the coin in circulation was admittedly bad. The counterfeits were divided into classes—good counterfeits, mediums, bad—and those so bad that they could only be passed off after dark. The reform of such a currency was bound to create great trouble, and it did so. There may be a question as to whether Mr. Megata effected his reform in the easiest and most prudent way ; but he did carry it through, to the undoubted permanent benefit of the land.

The railways were also being advanced with the utmost rapidity. The line from Fusan to Seoul, a railway passing over most difficult mountainous country, was opened last year, and has since been running very successfully. The continuation of the line from Seoul to Antung was also completed in rougher fashion as a temporary measure, while a good permanent line is being now finished. Beyond Antung a mountain railway was built right up to Mukden, thus making an unbroken connection from Flushing to Fusan. I travelled over the line from Fusan to Antung in July. It represented a remarkable opening-up of hitherto inaccessible country.

The educational policy of the Japanese had not up to the time I left the country been carried very far. They have accomplished very much less than might have been

expected in this direction. They have introduced a number of so-called reforms in other directions which, so far as I can see, do little good, and help to exasperate the people. They have revived in milder manner the effort of 1895 to abolish the top-knot, and they are further trying by every means to make the people give up wearing white garments, their national costume in winter-time. They have taken over the post and telegraph services from the Koreans, thus clearing out a body of old officials and making room for many new Japanese employés. As yet there has been no marked improvement in the service. They have altered the names of towns from the old Korean names to new Japanese ones. They have even altered the time, the Tokio time being officially and universally used by the Japanese. So far as my observation goes, these little things, needless interferences with the habits of the people, create more discontent than really big grievances.

As I went through the country parts this summer, after having heard the official side of the case in Seoul, I was often moved to grief by the stories brought to me in town after town. I had been over the north in the early days of the war—the days when men, although living under the dark clouds of battle, yet looked bravely forward to a brighter and more hopeful time. Now, however, hope seemed largely to have died. In every place the tales poured into my ears were the same—tales of harsh domination by uncontrolled Japanese soldiers, tales of brutality by irresponsible Japanese peasants, tales of the plundering of land and of home. When I passed through the city of Ping-yang, the missionaries came to me on the mid-day of the Sunday, and asked if I would speak to the great congregation of about 1,500 people who assembled every Sunday afternoon.

‘Why do you not have your regular preacher?’ I asked.

‘Our chief native minister was to have taken the service,’ they told me, ‘but yesterday afternoon four Japanese soldiers entered his house. They went towards his women’s quarter, and when he tried to stop them, they fell on him and beat him so badly that he cannot move out of the house.’

This is typical of many other stories, or else I would not quote it. When that afternoon I stood before that great throng, the women to my left and the men to my right, the question seemed to come up from the crowd: ‘What can we, a people not skilled in arms and not used to fighting, do with this stern warrior race over us?’

The Japanese authorities found themselves greatly hampered by the stolid opposition of the Korean Cabinet. The Emperor and his Ministers could not point-blank refuse to do what Mr. Hayashi demanded, but they could intrigue, delay, and forget, and shelter themselves behind Japan’s covenanted promise to maintain the integrity and independence of their country. Their friendship had by this time been turned to dislike, and they adopted a policy of passive resistance exceedingly annoying and hampering to the Japanese. Then it was that the Japanese resolved on a further step. They had by this time concluded the Treaty of Portsmouth and renewed their alliance with England. Now they would assume the sovereignty of Korea. Accordingly the Marquis Ito, Japan’s foremost statesman, arrived at Seoul in November last year, bringing with him a treaty that would at once sweep Korean independence out of existence. The Emperor and his advisers resolved that under no circumstances would they consent to sign such a treaty.

At this stage the Korean Emperor determined to ask

the American Government for aid. In the Treaty of 1883 the introductory clause provided : ' If other Powers deal unjustly or oppressively with either Government, the other will exert their good offices, on being informed of the case, to bring about an amicable arrangement, thus showing their good feelings.'

The Korean Emperor thought that this clause was something more than a pious expression of goodwill. He would appeal to Cæsar or, rather, to Roosevelt. The Korean case was carefully prepared, and was despatched by special messenger to Washington. The appeal was of no avail. President Roosevelt refused to interfere, and America was the first Power to withdraw its Minister from Seoul a few weeks afterwards.

A second memorial was in course of preparation when the blow fell. I have seen this second memorial. It states the Korean grievances so ably that perhaps you will pardon me for quoting from it at some length. 'The memorial began by reminding the American Government of its pledge in the treaty of 1883. 'Our Government,' it continued, 'at the present time feels forced to inform your Government that we are being dealt with 'unjustly and oppressively' by the Government and People of Japan, and to appeal to the President of the United States of America and your Government to, in accordance with the above-quoted article of the treaty, use your good offices in bringing about an amicable and just settlement.

'The actions of the Japanese Government and People that we complain of, and to which we desire to call your attention, are well known, and can be more than substantiated, and may be called in part as follows :

'*First*: IN POLITICS.—They have chosen out four or five of the worst officials, those who have previously disturbed the Government and, without regard to life

and property, have extorted from the people, and have put them in power ; and having placed their own nationals as advisers in almost all the departments, they are controlling the Government and oppressing the Emperor and his officials.

‘ *Second* : IN THE DISPENSING OF JUSTICE.—They have by force interfered with the Korean officers of Justice, so that they could not carry on their regular work ; they have been seizing the police power both at the capital and in the provincial towns, and trying both civil and criminal cases ; but if a Japanese subject has been doing injustice to a Korean, they not only do not stop him, but secretly encourage him to the detriment of Korean life and property.

‘ *Third* : IN THE MATTER OF FINANCES.—At the time of the attempt to reform the money system of Korea, some thirty or more Koreans willingly offered a loan of 3,000,000 yen to their Government, to be used in this attempt at reform ; but the Japanese Minister to Korea prevented the acceptance, and forced the Korean Government to accept a loan of 3,000,000 yen from the Japanese Government.

‘ Still later announcing that the currency of the country must again be changed, they presented a new coinage which was not any better than the old, and thus their profits were very great ; and when they came to exchange the new for the old, they always claimed a shortage of 2 or 3 per cent., and not only made the people thus suffer great loss, but made it so that they could not exchange their money, the trickery of which scheme is shown in the fact that if the exchange is not made by the end of next year the old money will be demonetized, and the whole country’s financial resources will be exhausted.

Fourth : IN MATTERS MILITARY.—At the opening of the Japan-Russia War, Japan forced Korea to make a treaty whereby Japan was allowed freely to transport her troops and munitions of war through Korea to the seat of war, and in return for this they are about to quarter tens of thousands of their troops in different parts of Korea, and have forced the Korean Government and people to surrender thousands of acres of land on which to quarter these troops in Seoul, Pyeng Yang, and other places, for which land the Government and people are receiving no recompense. In the name of the Military Authorities of Japan large tracts of land have also been staked out, on which in some cases Japanese merchants are building houses, and when the real owners apply for help or recompense they get no redress.

‘The Japanese asserted that temporary military necessities forced them to seize and undertake railroads ; and now, although peace has been declared, they still continue to hold and work them without receiving or seeking any concession from the Korean Government ; and for the property and houses of the people condemned for the road they do not give the worth, but are paying 1 per cent. of the value, or give them nothing at all. Not only have they thus seized all the land needed for the immediate road-bed, but at all points where they have decided to have stations they have seized and enclosed large tracts of land on all sides of these stations without recompense to the owners.

‘In sections of land of great importance from a commercial point of view, large tracts of land and thousands of houses have been staked off with the Japanese military stakes, as needed for military purposes, and not to be sold, thus preventing all land exchanges

and sales in these sections, and causing great loss and distress to the Koreans and, possibly, great profit to the Japanese.'

The appeal was of no avail.

The Japanese had determined that the treaty should go through, and that the independence and autonomy of Korea should cease. They were willing to use as many soft phrases as necessary, and to describe the transfer in any pleasant language that the Koreans liked. The Marquis Ito found, however, on his arrival at Seoul, that the Emperor and his Ministers would not give in. The new treaty proposed first that the Japanese should take control and direct the foreign relations of Korea, thus sweeping away Korean Ministers abroad and the Ministers of other Powers to Korea, and leaving all diplomatic work to be done through Tokyo. The Japanese were to appoint a Resident-General, who would live in Seoul, and a Resident in every Korean place where they considered necessary. The last shreds of independence were to be stripped from the country.

When the Emperor was asked to agree to this, he replied that such a treaty could only be made after consultation with the wise men and counsellors of the country. The Marquis Ito urged very strongly that it was absolutely necessary for the preservation of peace in the Far East. The Ministers were warned that if they did not agree to it, their obstinacy would mean the instant destruction of the Korean Empire.

The negotiations continued for several days. During this time the Japanese had a great body of troops—horse, foot, and artillery—assembled round the Palace and engaged in all sorts of manœuvres. Everything was done that could be done to awe both the Palace and the people. Then one fateful evening the Japanese repre-

sentatives insisted on at once proceeding with the business. There came a conference lasting until long after midnight. One or two Ministers showed signs of yielding, borne down by the fierce methods of the Japanese diplomatists. The Korean Prime Minister, Han Kew Sul, rose and declared that he would at once report their words to the Emperor. As he passed out of the Council Room he was seized by Mr. Hagiwara, First Secretary of the Japanese Legation, and hurried into a side-room, a prisoner. The other Ministers were allowed to believe that he had been murdered. Courage is rarely the strong point of the Korean. At an early hour in the morning the Ministers submitted, a clause being added that 'The Japanese Government guarantees to maintain the security and respect the dignity of the Korean Imperial House.'

It was an agreement extorted by sheer terror. In giving this account of what happened on that night, I would like to say that I have accepted no second-hand evidence in preparing it. One of the leading participants there told me the story, and I had his narrative confirmed from other quarters.

The Japanese since then have increased their hold on the country in every way. One of their most successful moves for creating the monopoly of Japanese interests was to make the position of Mr. McLeavy Brown, the British Commissioner of Customs, so unpleasant that he was compelled to retire. The Customs Service is being more and more manned by Japanese, and a Japanese is now at the head of it. The right of giving concessions, which formerly lay with the Emperor, has been taken by the Resident-General, and it is perhaps not unnatural that in the distribution of concessions the Japanese occupy the front place. The talk of the 'open

door' and 'equal opportunities,' of which we heard so much some time ago, is slackening.

The removal of Mr. McLeavy Brown has brought up many charges of partiality against the Customs officers. This was perhaps inevitable.

The most hopeful side of the Japanese activity in Korea to-day is the fact that the Marquis Ito has been since the end of last year the Resident-General. No one who has even a most casual acquaintance with him can doubt his sincere desire to do his best for Korea as a whole. Unfortunately he is hampered in his work by a number of incompetent officials, and by the great influence of the military party, which is in favour of strong measures. It yet remains to be seen if the Marquis can enforce a policy of conciliation and justice. If he can do so, the mistakes of the past may yet be forgotten in the triumphs of the future.

Here we have a strong, brave, clannish people planting themselves down amidst a race of comparative weaklings. The Korean is going to the wall. The process is inevitable, and yet one cannot help a passing pang of pity for the man, as one sees him thrown against rough stones. I, for one, am by no means sure that Japan would not win for herself greater glory and sounder empire if in the process of the absorption of Korea some respect was paid to the rights of the weaker side.

The CHAIRMAN: I think it must have occurred to some of us in the course of this lecture to ask, Where is the connection between a society concerning itself with Central Asian affairs and Korea? But I do not think we are going out of our province in taking up the question Mr. McKenzie has brought before us when we bear in mind the tremendous interest that the Anglo-Japanese

Alliance of 1902 gave us in the affairs of our allies, and that we have thereby undertaken responsibilities in connection with the preservation and consolidation of our interests and the maintenance of peace in India and Eastern Asia. The treaty constitutes a guarantee for the maintenance of our territorial rights in India and the East, and hence we as a nation are deeply and immediately interested in everything that concerns the policy of our ally. Mr. McKenzie has dealt with the question of Japanese policy in Korea in a very interesting way, but I think it not unlikely that many of his opinions may be challenged in the discussion which I now invite.

DISCUSSION

MR. VALENTINE CHIROL said : I have listened with very great interest to Mr. McKenzie's paper, first of all because I was myself in Korea at about the period from which he began his retrospect of the contest between Russia and Japan in the country, and also because, in the attitude he has taken up towards the Japanese there, I seem to hear an echo of the doubtless equally honest, but equally bitter, criticism which one so often hears from foreigners on our own work in Egypt. There has been one feature as to our position in Egypt which has greatly facilitated our task—we have not had to take our lower classes with us. The representatives of the British power and the British name in Egypt are all picked men, of high training and high principle. The Japanese have sent men of high principle and high training to Korea, but amongst their lower classes which have gone there in their tens of thousands there are, as I believe would be the case amongst our own lower classes, many who do not know how to treat aliens properly, and who show towards them not merely want of sympathy, but even sometimes brutality. Consequently Japan has had a difficulty in Korea with which we have not been confronted in Egypt. The whole tone of Mr. McKenzie's observations reminds me of the tone of many foreign critics of English rule in Egypt. Indeed, if you substitute 'the Khedive' and 'the Khedivial Court' for 'the Emperor' and 'the Korean Court,' and the names of some of our own high officials for the names of high Japanese officials, you would have, I think, almost in the same words the same sort of criticism which is constantly applied to our political relations with Egypt—to relations which have, on the whole, been to the advantage of the Egyptians as well as to ourselves. (Hear, hear.) Like the Marquis Ito, Lord Cromer has the reputation of being a very strong and stubborn man, and one may often hear, not only from the lips of Egyptians like Mustapha Kamel Pasha, a stream of patriotic indignation at the way in which, in his view, the independence of Egypt, under Lord Cromer's despotic sway, is entirely sacrificed to British ambitions, and the wishes of a

downtrodden people ignored; indeed, I have often heard the same line of argument pursued by Englishmen—Englishmen whose honesty is no less and no greater than that of Mr. McKenzie himself. Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, for example, will tell you stories by the hour of atrocities perpetrated in the name of England, and abuses tolerated for our own selfish purposes. Therefore I think we ought to take with certain reservations the stories which Mr. McKenzie has heard in Korea. I do not mean to say that the Japanese have not committed great mistakes. I recognise, for example, the gravity of the mistake made after the Chino-Japanese War, when the Japanese participated in the murderous conspiracy against the Queen of Korea. But, as Mr. McKenzie has himself told us, the Japanese Government dismissed the Minister who had been an agent in the conspiracy, and put him upon his trial. I believe, too, that when, in more recent times, serious grievances have been brought to the knowledge of the Japanese Government, there has been every disposition to provide redress. I am glad to note that Mr. McKenzie does full justice to the excellent administrative work done by the Japanese in Korea; and, for my own part, I feel confident that the Japanese in the end will learn, at some cost to themselves and at some cost also to the people of the country, that the rights and sentiments of the Koreans must be preserved and respected. They have introduced into Korea elements of enlightenment and progress that have never existed there in the past, and under their own rulers the Koreans have been subject to far lower depths of corruption and brutality than can possibly exist at the present day. (Cheers.) With regard to the proposed suppression of the top-knot, that is an exaggerated grievance. After all, the Japanese only tried to impose on the Koreans what has been done in their own country. Considering that the Japanese people, who at first resented it as much as the Koreans, have themselves submitted to what Mr. McKenzie calls a degradation, it can hardly be now as a degradation that they seek to impose it upon the Koreans.

MR. MCKENZIE: I said that the Koreans regarded it as degrading.

MR. CHURCH: When the order to cut off the top-knot was first issued, the Japanese thought it degrading, but they soon found it was not so, and accepted it. And this will probably happen also with the Koreans.

MR. W. CREWDSON said : I have followed with great interest the paper read to us ; but whilst the lecturer was giving his criticisms I was wondering how a Japanese newspaper correspondent would report to his journal his impressions of a visit to the territory we have recently acquired in South Africa. He would have found many difficulties still remaining to be settled, the explanation being, of course, that since the declaration of peace sufficient time has not elapsed to deal with many urgent questions of administration. The Japanese were forced to obtain control of Korea, as the accomplishment of Russian designs would have added great weight to the traditional sentiment that the geographical position of Korea made that country resemble a dagger constantly pointing to the heart of Japan. The 6,000 Japanese settlers in Korea before the war were suddenly augmented by another 50,000, and these not of the governing or cultured classes. In these circumstances, and bearing in mind the state of Korea under its native rulers, it is not to be wondered at that excesses and unfortunate occurrences have been reported. If any foreigner wished at the present time to judge English colonial policy by the state of affairs in South Africa, we should think it unfair, and we should ask the critic to look at other parts of the Empire, telling him that things in South Africa were in a state of transition, and would work out all right in the end. That is our determination, and I believe that the determination of Japan to do justly and well by Korea is just as strong as our determination to do right in South Africa. In proof of this I may refer you to Formosa. In the Consular reports of our own Government you will find what the Japanese colonists and colonial administration have done in that very turbulent island. Not only have they taken an intractable population in hand and produced an ordered system of administration ; they have gone further than other nations in doing what is right. For instance, they have dealt with that most difficult problem, opium-smoking. This habit was destroying the vitality of the native population ; but the Japanese have grappled with the evil so well that our own Consular reports show that opium-smokers are diminishing at the rate of 1,000 per month. Seeing what Japanese colonial policy has been elsewhere, where time and opportunity have been theirs, I think it savours of hasty criticism to judge at present of the Japanese policy in Korea. (Hear, hear.)

MR. MCKENZIE, in answer to a question, said that he understood that at the present time there were about 90,000 to 100,000 Japanese in Korea, besides 30,000 Japanese troops ; the number had been rapidly rising of late. Proceeding to reply on the discussion, he said : I must protest very sincerely against any comparison between the great work of England in Egypt and the work of Japan in Korea. I have yet to find that in Egypt we have torn up a treaty with the weaker Power ; I have yet to find that we are administering Egypt for our own good alone, and not for the good of the common people there. When I spoke against certain features of Japanese proceedings in Korea, I was not thinking so much of the grievances of officials ; I was protesting most of all against a state of affairs under which every Korean finds it difficult to obtain justice. I have seen men turned out of their homes and dispossessed of everything, and this has roused my indignation. I cared nothing, and I care little now, for the high Korean who has had to make way for a Japanese official. When I see England doing what has been done in Korea—for instance, acquiring private property wholesale without payment of any compensation—then I hope I shall as heartily protest against England's action as I have spoken against that of Japan. It is a pleasure to hear of the admirable measures Japan has taken, with so much success, to stop opium-smoking in Formosa. Her policy in this respect has, unfortunately, been very different in Korea. Under the native régime opium was forbidden, and opium-smokers were punished. I have myself seen men in prison as opium-smokers. To-day all over Northern Korea Japanese pedlars are selling opium without restraint and creating a great opium trade.

THE CHAIRMAN, in summing up the discussion, said : There is evidently considerable difference of opinion amongst us in reference to the conclusions of the lecturer. He is to be congratulated upon the delivery of an exceedingly interesting lecture, one which must have entailed many hours of preparation, besides giving evidence of the intelligence and ability he displayed in investigating the state of affairs in Korea. But I confess that it always seems to me very difficult to arrive at a just appreciation of the administration of a country, however closely one may endeavour to apprehend it, in the course of a few months' residence. I think that perhaps hardly sufficient stress has been laid upon the position of Korea in relation to Japanese interests.

A glance at the map shows what an important strategic position it is for Japan. It is really an outpost, and a very strong outpost, of Japan's first line of defence. It would have been at the peril of her own existence for Japan to have allowed any great Power to acquire a dominant position in Korea. Her own predominance there has now been recognised by all the Powers, being recognised by ourselves first of all in the Treaty of 1902. The first article of that treaty declared that Japan was 'interested in a peculiar degree politically, as well as commercially and industrially, in Korea.' Almost precisely the same words, if I recollect rightly, were used in the Russo-Japanese Treaty of Peace signed at Portsmouth at the close of 1905. Not only has Japan obtained possession by her victories, but Korea was incapable of managing her own affairs. She would have been in a very different position if she had had statesmen who could have foreseen what was coming, or who, at all events, had sought to guide the administration in the proper direction. So incompetent was the Government of Korea, that not only were the relations between the two Powers imperilled, but the peace of the world was in danger, and therefore it was absolutely necessary for Japan to become, as she is to-day, the dominant Power in Korea. Japan has been instituting great reforms, and some of them, no doubt, have been very difficult to carry out. We all are acquainted with plenty of instances in which the reformer is by no means a popular person. As to the complaint that the services of foreigners were dispensed with, I may say that my sympathies are rather with Japan. She has acquired by her victories the position she occupies in Korea, and she has plenty of capable men well able to undertake and carry on the administration of the country. Many of the grievances brought forward are from sources which it is rather difficult to sympathize with. I will give an illustration of what I mean. I saw the other day that an American firm had constructed a line of street railways in Seoul, 'already,' said the writer, 'operating at a nice profit,' and with good prospects before it. He seemed to think it an intolerable thing that the Japanese Government should seek to purchase these railways. But such purchase would accord with the general policy of the Powers. Korea will undoubtedly advance under Japanese administration, and we must look for an extension of Japanese control of public works. There are difficulties in the way of progress, prominent

amongst them being the fact that there is a semihostile population to deal with. As to the behaviour of the lower classes of Japanese who entered Korea, I agree with Mr. Chirol that it is a misfortune they were allowed to enter without being brought under adequate control. But you must recollect that the Resident-General himself has complained of the behaviour of those whom he called the 'nationals.' So far from endeavouring to hide their shortcomings, he called attention to them, which indicates a desire on his part to do justly. In this connection I should like to quote his own words. Speaking only this year, the Marquis Ito said: 'Not only in regard to Korea, but to the whole problem of the Far East, nothing should be done opposed to the sentiment of the Powers. If she forfeits their sympathy, Japan will be laying up for herself misfortunes in the future.' These words of the Marquis Ito, than whom Japan has, I suppose, no more patriotic and far-seeing statesman, show that the need for just government in Korea is recognised. I will only ask you now to permit me to present to Mr. McKenzie our very grateful thanks for his lecture, and to say that, however we may differ from some of the opinions he has put forward, we welcome the opportunity he has given us to hear the impressions he has gained in his visits to Korea.

The vote of thanks having been seconded by Mr. Chirol and carried with acclamation, the proceedings closed.

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